

Elisha's Aureate Dust

The Power of Resurrection Accorded to
His Bones by the Bible Might be
Made a Source of Fabulous
Wealth, If—

(By E. J. Beals-Hoffpauir.)

I had been overcome by the heat of the city and sought rest and quiet at a farm house in one of the remotest corners of the Great Smoky Mountains. A few days after my arrival I was approached by a mountain youth of perhaps twenty summers, who stated that he desired to speak to me privately. His manner suggested the unusual, and I gladly followed him a short way in the wood and politely waited for him to state his business. He seemed somewhat embarrassed at first, but after assuring himself that there was no possibility of being overheard, he commenced in a very confidential tone:

"Yer see, neighbor, we uns ain't got much eddication, an' calkilate as how you un is a little about the smartest feller as ever kem to these diggins, 'cep'tin' it might be our 'zidin' Elder, but he won't do, an' I reckon as how I'll ha' ter ax ye un ter do it fur me."

"Would be glad to know the nature of your wants," said I, "and if there is any possible way in which I can be of assistance to you, I'll gladly do so."

"Wall, now yer see, most of us mountain folks is jist so so, but I'se different. I'se got some efication, an' I does a power o' thinkin'. I'm a sort of a leader in meetin', an' I read some books, but I don't know nuthin' 'bout ornithology an' them other big things. I reads the Quarterly and the Advocate an' th' Bible, an' that's 'bout all that any of us mountain folks reads. But whut I want yer to hep me 'bout is this here. Tuther day I wuz a suttin' an' a readin' ov the scrip'chur, when all ter onct I lit on this passige;" (here he drew from his pocket a crumpled piece of paper and reads as follows):

"And Elisha died and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

"And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men, and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet."

"Ye un ken find that 'ar scrip'chur in 2 Kings 13:20. When I read that 'ar scrip'chur I felt powerful excited, an' I 'lowed right ter onct as how if I hed some one as knowed all 'bout ornithology an' the theological survey uv the kentry ter go 'long with me an' find them bones, we uns could

make a power ov money a resurrectin' people as had died 'fore they got ready."

I was very much amused at his novel plan for gathering in the anguish plaster, and by way of encouragement asked if he knew of any case in that immediate neighborhood where money would be paid for such work, and if he was positive that they had passed out before they were fully prepared to meet god.

"Wall now," said he, in a tone of disgust, "I ain't hearn ov no one a dyin' around here as semed a hurtin' ter go. Thar's ol' man Horton as war a 'zorter in Methurdist meetin', an' could sing louder 'an eny un else I knowed on, when he was tuck down sick he ups and had two doctors an' took a power ov medicine an' billed yarbs a tryin' ter keep from goin' ter glory; tho' he 'lowed all times 'fore he wuz tooken as how he war anxious ter go. I 'low his folks 'ud give a right smart pile ter have him fetched back."

"Well," said I, "how do you propose to go about securing those valuable bones?"

"Now thar," and he warmed up to his subject, "thar's jest whar I need hep. Yer see ef I could find some un as could take me ter the land ov Judy, an' knowed about the theological survey ov the kentry wher he got thar, we uns could stop at one ov these here hotels, and lay low fer awhile, playin' as how we war a travelin' fer our health, an' all the time be a scoutin' 'round a huntin' ov them bones, an' when we uns disklivered whar they war, we uns could lope off some dark night fer home, an' mebbe ef 'twarn't too fur we uns could git in someers 'bout Chattanooga long to'ards daylight, and then the best pack ov hounds thet ever treed a coon couldn't ketch we uns. I 'low as how I'd do a right smart power er runnin' 'fore I'd drop that poke er bones."

Here I interrupted long enough to assure him of my confidence in his plan, but questioned him in regard to some of the minor details, such as finding the grave, or rather cave, where the bones were deposited.

"Low as I calkilated on all ov them kind ov things," said he with pride. "Fers findin' thet 'ar grave is consarned, I guess a feller as knows the theological survey kin find it rite easy, an' as fer goin' inter a grave yard I'se jist the feller as kin do it. I kin climb any ol' fence, an' the ghostes can't bother me 'cause I'se got a charm agin 'em. I wouldn't ha' ter carry er spade 'cause them bones ain't buried like other folkses bones, but jist a layin' 'roun' loose in a cave. They war buried sorter like they buried the savior, 'cep'n the door

warn't sealed up. Soon as we uns 'ud git ter the cave I'd jump in and put 'em inter a poke whar I'd take along ter kerry 'em in, an' then jump outen the caven an' lite. All I ast yer is ter hep me find the place. I'll kerry them all the way from thar ter home. Folks aint gwine ter ask no questions seein' a man a kerryin' a poke ov bones."

I agreed with him that a "poke of bones" might be carried through a community without exciting much curiosity, but suggested that he let me into his plans for operating, once the bones were secured. This he seemed anxious to do, for I had scarcely finished the request when he began:—

"Soon'st we git home we uns ken go an' see ol' lady Horton, an' 'splain ter her the vartue ov the bones, an' how as they's Bible bones, an' already done ris' up one man, an' I know as how she'd have we uns resurrect the ol' man, an' onct he war ris an' commenced er talkin' about it we uns 'ud have jobs er resseractin' from all 'round in to'ards Chattynooogy an' Atlanty. An' I low as when ther ain't no more resurrectin' ter be did we uns could take the bones back ter ther cave an' put 'em whar they war, an' mebbe 'Lisha's folks 'ud never know they'd been teched, 'cause I ain't never hearn ov no one from Judyas ever kem over outer the valley, leastwise I don't ricollect it. Now, ef you uns is 'greeable an' wants ter go, we ken jist lite out fer Judy an' bring back that poke ov bones, an' I gess we uns ken make nigh onter a hunderd dollars in this here valley a resurrectin' folks as has been dead. I know thar's Ebenezzer Jones as would give five dollars to git ris so's ter see who his widder married; he wuz the jealousdest man I ever seed. An' thar's Pete Wilson, he warn't afeard ter die, an' warn't a keer-in' much, but Eph Holden shot him in the back an' kilt him kinder suddint, an' I know Pete 'ud give two bits ter be resurrected long ernuf to find out who 'twas as kilt him an' shoot the stuffin' outen Eph. An' thar's the Wigginses, they'd give a power ov money ter keep us from resurrectin' the Joneses, 'cause yer know the three Wiggins boys married the three Jones gals, an' one day the Wigginses and the Joneses got inter a rumpus with guns, an' when the smoke cleared off thar warn't eny seed left ov the Joneses; the ol' man an' all three ov the Jones boys were kilt, an' ol' lady Jones she took on so powerful 'bout it that she ups and dies, an' the Wigginses they got all the property; an' now I calkilate as how the Joneses was ris they'd git back that property an' ther Wiggins boys 'ud